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**Approved By:**

Ben Petlock

**Prepared By:**

FAS Japan Staff

**Report Highlights:**

FoodExport NorthEast/MidWest Trade Mission Explores Possibilities in the Tokyo Market; Visit by Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and First Lady; ATO Tokyo Helps Explain Health Benefits of Soymilk; American Hardwoods Export Council Introduces New Environmental Profiles; Senior Agricultural Attaché Invited to Imperial Stock Farm; Agricultural Exchanges Continue to Strengthen Ties between Japan and the United States; FAS Japan Visits Igunal Farm in Miyagi Prefecture

## General Information:

# The Wasabi

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**FoodExport NorthEast/MidWest Trade Mission Explores Possibilities in the Tokyo Market:** On Monday, October 27, Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Director Rachel Nelson and ATO Deputy Director Evan Mangino gave a market overview presentation to a team of small and medium-sized companies on a trade mission organized by the State and Regional Trade Groups to introduce various companies to the Japanese and South Korean markets. The group represented a wide range of products including frozen desserts, barbecue sauce, and cured fish. The companies were very interested in the proposed consumption tax increase to 10 percent (tentatively scheduled for October 2015) and the Trans Pacific Partnership's ability to reduce tariffs on imported food. Following visits to retail outlets and a product showcase, the team was very enthusiastic about future export opportunities in Japan and several companies will return in March to exhibit a FOODEX.

**Visit by Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and First Lady:** On October 19-21 Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Tokyo assisted a delegation from the Commonwealth of Virginia, led by Governor Terry McAuliffe. Agriculture-related program highlights include a visit by the Virginia Secretary of Agriculture Todd Haymore to the Tabata factory, which processes primarily peanuts and almonds, and a visit by First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe to a local school and to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to learn about Japanese school lunch policies and practices.



**ATO Tokyo Helps Explain Health Benefits of Soymilk:** On Monday, September 29, Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Japan Director Rachel Nelson welcomed approximately 100 female members of ABC Cooking School as part of a cooking demonstration and nutritional seminar sponsored by U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), Kikkoman and the Ohio Soybean Council. After a cooking demonstration highlighting how to use soymilk in cooking various dishes Dr. Jin Ran Chan from the Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center spoke about the health benefits of soymilk in terms of women's beauty and children's health, and Bill Bayliss, farmer/Board Member of the Ohio Soybean Council, described how he ensures the safety and integrity of identity preserved soybeans. The event was filmed and will be available for ABC Cooking School members.

**American Hardwoods Export Council Introduces New Environmental Profiles:** On September 29, the U.S. Embassy Tokyo's Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino delivered opening remarks at a media event launching the new American Hardwood Environmental Profile (AHEP) available upon request for each individual consignment of U.S. hardwoods. The AHEP offers buyers a complete lifecycle analysis of the specific hardwood product and provides Japanese furniture manufacturers the data required to meet stringent new sustainability requirements in key export markets around the globe. The customizable, species-specific environmental profiles will revolutionize the way consumers view the sustainability and environmental friendliness of responsibly sourced U.S. hardwood products.



**Senior Agricultural Attaché Invited to Imperial Stock Farm:** On October 1, Senior Agricultural Attaché Elizabeth Autry joined other members of the diplomatic community in Tokyo on a visit to the Imperial Stock Farm. The Imperial Stock Farm, which supplies meat, dairy products and some vegetables for the Imperial Household, was located in Chiba Prefecture from 1875 to 1969, when it was moved to Tochigi Prefecture to make room for the Narita International Airport. At 622 acres, the current farm is half the size of what it was previously, but is still extremely large by Japanese standards. (The average farm size in Japan is less than 5 acres.) The farm contains grassland, forest land and numerous buildings, including a meat processing plant and a dairy plant.



**Agricultural Exchanges Continue to Strengthen Ties between Japan and the United States:** On Saturday, October 11, the U.S. Embassy, Tokyo's Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino provided remarks at a welcome home ceremony for more than 50 agricultural trainees returning from a nearly 2-year long agricultural training program in the United States. These promising young farmers were the latest beneficiaries of academic and in-the-field training organized by the Japan

Agricultural Exchange Council (JAEC), which has been sending young Japanese farmers overseas to do advanced agricultural training for more than 60 years. The Embassy's Office of Agricultural Affairs maintains a close relationship with JAEC and regularly keeps in touch with alumni, nearly all of whom go on to successful careers in production agriculture in Japan. Among the most recent group of Trainees were young men and women from Hokkaido to Okinawa, with interests as diverse as beef cattle, apple farming, and leafy green vegetables.

**FAS Japan Visits Igunal Farm in Miyagi Prefecture:** On September 26, 2014, Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Tokyo and Osaka staff visited the Igunal Farm located in the Miyagi Prefecture in northeast Japan, an area that was severely devastated by the 2011 Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. The Igunal Farm is an agricultural corporation that was established in December 2011 by four young farmers who lost their families, houses, and farms during the disaster. Using a special loan created by the Japanese government to help farmers affected by the calamity, the four farmers were able to lease farmland, greenhouse facilities, and machinery. During the visit, FAS learned that the farmers faced the major difficulty of high salt concentration in the underground water supply due to 2011 tsunami and, as a result, the Igunal Farm is currently forced to rely on a public water supply and sewage system raising operating expenses, although it is also investing in a high-tech water supply, as well advanced lighting systems and other new farming facility materials. To offset these high costs, the farm decided to produce quality products that are targeted to high-end restaurants and consumers. Currently the farm, which employs six full-time farmers and 28 part-time workers, produces cucumbers, tomatoes, leek onions, and strawberries in three greenhouses that total approximately 2.5 acres in size.

The farm was named "Igunal" (a local term meaning "It gets better") in the hope that things will improve in the future for the residents of Miyagi Prefecture. The visit to the Igunal Farm was made possible by one of the member farmers who had trained on a farm in Colorado 10 years ago through an educational exchange program offered by the Japan Agricultural Exchange Council, a longtime partner of FAS Japan.



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